

MINUTES OF SUBSEQUENT ANNUAL TOWN BUDGET MEETING
TOWN OF ELLINGTON
MAY 25, 2005

As the Annual Town Budget was defeated at referendum held on May 18, 2005, electors and citizens qualified to vote in Town Meetings were hereby notified that a subsequent Annual Town Budget Meeting of the Town of Ellington would be held on Wednesday, May 25, 2005 at 8:00 p.m. prevailing time at the Ellington High School, 37 Maple Street, for the following purpose:

First Selectman Dennis C. Milanovich called the meeting to order at 8:10 p.m., and then asked for nominations for a Moderator. **Mark Joyse** nominated **Mary Cardin moderator**, seconded by **Richard Cleary**, vote by acclamation was unanimous, motion so carried

The Moderator then read the warning for the meeting, which was published in the Journal Inquirer on May 19, 2005 and is recorded in these records preceding these minutes.

To consider and appropriate upon the recommendation of and as allocated by the Board of Finance the total sum for all expenditures, a/k/a budget grand total, for the fiscal year 2005-2006 the sum of \$ 37,682,753., which is the sum recommended by the Board of Finance on May 23rd 2005.

Mark Joyse made the motion to, move to adjourn the town meeting to a referendum to be held on Wednesday June 1, 2005 at the Ellington High School, 37 Maple Street from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. with one question,

"SHALL THE TOWN OF ELLINGTON APPROPRIATE, UPON THE RECOMMENDATION OF AND AS ALLOCATED BY THE BOARD OF FINANCE, THE TOTAL SUM FOR ALL EXPENDITURES, A/K/A BUDGET GRAND TOTAL, FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2005-2006 THE SUM OF \$37,682,753 ? " seconded by **Richard Cleary**

Joseph Wehr of Megan Circle proposed a revision of what the Bd. Of Finance recommended. Instead of a 6.48% increase in town taxes he wanted to see it drop to 5.98%, just a hair below 6%. This would change the increase in the mill rate down to 1.95 mills and take \$113,000.00 out of the budget. Mr. Wehr explained part of his reasoning was that if you were to look at surrounding towns are and are not approving, his personal belief is anything 6% or higher will be rejected. Mr. Wehr suggested the \$113,000.00 come directly from the Bd. Of Education relative to the increase in their health insurance rates which are at 6%, the lowest increase in the past 20 years. Mr. Wehr stated the Bd. Of Ed. current proposed budget is a 10% increase which would leave a 4% surplus which comes out to \$135,000.00 and the \$113,000.00 decrease he is proposing would be covered by that. Mr. Wehr said he would like to avoid a referendum and felt if we could get it under 6% the budget could pass.

The Moderator was then asked if Mr. Wehr's statement was a motion. The Moderator stated it was a suggestion, which Mr. Wehr immediately stated he would like to make a motion that the increase be changed to 1.95 mills and 5.98% in spending, instead of a 2.1% increase in the mill rate and the 6.48% increase in spending. The Moderator then questioned if he was moving to amend the motion on the floor. Mr. Wehr stated yes he was, and was asked to re-state said motion.

The Moderator then gave clarification that Mr. Wehr was moving to amend the motion to adjourn the town meeting with the question to say *THE TOTAL SUM FOR ALL EXPENDITURES, A/K/A BUDGET GRAND TOTAL, FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2005-2006 THE SUM OF \$37,569,753 ? "* with said \$113,000.00 reduction coming from the Board of Education Budget. seconded by **Thomas Palshaw** of Pinney St.

Discussion continued on the amendment with opinions given by but not limited to Mr. Ernest Boothroyd and Mr. Robert Clements, and former chairman of Bd. of Finance Michael Scudieri, & Ms. Erin White.

At this time Tony Littizzio, Director of Business Services for the Ellington School System stated he had spoken to Mr. Wehr on the telephone today and that it did look like a 10% increase but they had a 6 1/2% increase in health benefits this year which is lower than surrounding towns, but the increase to the 3 groups starting at 6% then 6.5% and finally 6.8%, does make this overall percentage vary as the increases for individuals vary.

Lisa Hurley stated she found it disturbing that someone chose to make a phone call today a couple of hours before today's meeting and felt the Bd. of Finance did their homework on getting the facts straight and she didn't feel a reduction like that should be made because a phone call was made.

Michael Gan commended Mr. Wehr for doing his homework and that he had been bothered by articles in the paper stating the voters were the wrong voters, voting wrong and felt they should be able to attend these meetings and speak their mind. Mr. Gan stated he would probably not vote to accept the budget and the reason he would vote to not accept it is that he can't afford it, simple as that.

Minutes of subsequent Annual Town Budget Meeting continued:

Discussion continued, with various opinions for and opposed to the proposed budget and ways to decrease the budget within the town .

Mr. Roberson, Chairman of the Bd. of Ed. then addressed questions about teacher negotiated salaries that were asked by Mr. Gerald Skolnick .

Discussion continued

Bill Harford made the motion to move the question seconded by Ernest Boothroyd, motion so moved

The motion to amend said budget with one question:

"SHALL THE TOWN OF ELLINGTON APPROPRIATE, UPON THE RECOMMENDATION OF AND AS ALLOCATED BY THE BOARD OF FINANCE, THE TOTAL SUM FOR ALL EXPENDITURES, A/K/A BUDGET GRAND TOTAL, FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2005-2006 THE SUM OF \$37,569,753 ? "

By a show of hands said motion to amend failed.

At this time the Chairman of the Board of Finance Robert Pagani explained the changes in the proposed budget with Operating Expense Reductions (additions) and Revenue Increases (reductions) See attached Proposed Budget Overview. Mr. Pagani went through these changes and provided explanations to the changes. Mr. Pagani then stated in part, "I will tell you this, to get this budget down to no increase is a pipe dream, it will not happen and its not responsible. If you want to bring it down to a 1 mill increase you will lose an entire recreation program, shut Brookside Park, shut down all after school recreation, close the beach, no swimming lessons and honestly I don't know what else."

Gerald Skolnick then questioned out of the \$715,638. in reductions \$407,000. came from town services and \$300,000. from the school budget. He further stated 56% of reductions were taken from 33% of the budget town services and only 47 % was taken from the 66% portion of the school budget and asked for the rationale in that and why didn't you make it equitable on both sides.

Mr. Pagani stated it was important to provide a good education for our kids and we do as much as we can. He further stated he knew there were people on the town side that wish they had taken more from Board of Education and less from the town side, some things we cut would have been nice to have and not necessarily necessities but we view education a little differently. Mr. Pagani stated it was a 2.1 million dollar increase for the Board of Education over last year, but the board of education has state and federal mandates that they must do. Robert Clements a member of the Board of Finance, then stated what most don't understand is that very little of the Board of Education's budget is discretionary, most of it is mandated. Mr. Clements stated they had more discretion with what to take from the town than from the Board of Education because of mandates.

Discussion along with questions and answers continued for an extended period.

Ernest Boothroyd made the motion to move the question seconded by Robert Clements, vote by acclamation was unanimous motion so carried.

The Town Meeting adjourned to referendum at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted



Cynthia J. Lacapruca, Town Clerk

Received for record 4:03p.m. 6/1/2005